

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6685

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 05418

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS:OVIP (FUKUDA, TAKEO)  
SUBJECT: FUKUDA VISIT PAPERS: JAPAN AND THE MIDEAST

REF: TOKYO 4578

1. ALTHOUGH NOT A MAJOR ACTOR ON THE MIDEAST STAGE, JAPAN IS VITALLY AFFECTED BY EVENTS IN THAT REGION, PARTICULARLY AS THEY IMPINGE ON ITS IMPORTS OF PERSIAN GULF OIL, WHICH ACCOUNT FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF JAPAN'S PETROLEUM NEEDS. SINCE THE TRAUMA OF THE 1973 OIL SHOCK, JAPAN'S POLICY IN THE MIDEAST HAS BEEN GUIDED BY THE NEED:

-- TO ENSURE A STABLE SUPPLY OF OIL THROUGH CULTIVATION OF FRIENDLY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE ARAB STATES;

-- TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS WHICH WOULD EITHER ALIENATE THE U.S. OR IMPEDE WESTERN PEACE EFFORTS IN THE REGION.

AS A RESULT, THE JAPANESE HAVE GENERALLY ASSUMED A PRO-ARAB TILT IN POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC MATTERS RELATING TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, WHILE CAREFULLY REFRAINING FROM SUPPORT OF BLATANT ANTI-ISRAELI ACTIONS THAT MIGHT  
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ANTAGONIZE U.S. PUBLIC OPINION. THEY HAVE ATTEMPTED, WITH VARYING SUCCESS, TO DEVELOP BETTER TIES WITH THE ARAB STATES THROUGH AID, TRADE AND INVESTMENT. DESPITE TRADITIONAL RELUCTANCE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PURELY POLITICAL ENDS, THEY HAVE COOPERATED WITH THE U.S. IN GIVING MUCH-NEEDED SUPPORT TO THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY AND ARE NOW EXPLORING A JOINT SCHEME WITH SAUDI

ARABIA TO ASSIST THE RELATIVELY MODERATE REGIME IN SUDAN.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA'S VISIT TO THE AREA IN JANUARY THIS YEAR IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR JAPANESE INTEREST IN HAVING THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE AGENDA. ALTHOUGH PRIVATELY ENCOURAGED BY SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVES, THE JAPANESE HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO BECOME TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE EGYPTIAN SIDE OF THE ACRIMONIOUS SPLIT IN THE ARAB CAMP. ON OCCASION, MOST RECENTLY DURING SONODA'S VISIT TO THE MIDEAST THIS JANUARY, THE ARABS HAVE SOUGHT TO ENLIST JAPAN IN URGING GREATER US PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS FOR CONCESSIONS--A SUGGESTION THE JAPANESE WILL TAKE UP ONLY MOST TENTATIVELY.

3. THUS THE JAPANESE FACE SOMETHING OF A DILEMMA IN THEIR MIDEAST POLICY. THEY HAVE A MAJOR STAKE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A DURABLE PEACE IN THE MIDEAST AND ARE WORRIED THAT PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT APPEAR TO BE DIMINISHING. PM FUKUDA WILL EXPRESS THESE CONCERNS DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE RELUCTANCE OF THE JAPANESE EITHER TO OFFEND THE ARABS OR TO ENGAGE IN POTENTIALLY RISKY DIPLOMATIC VENTURES IN THE REGION WILL LIKELY INHIBIT PM FUKUDA FROM OFFERING MORE ACTIVE JAPANESE ASSISTANCE IN THE PURSUIT OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. MANSFIELD

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